

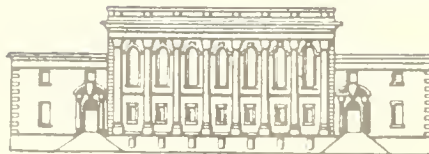
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SOME ASPECTS OF MIDDLE-CLASS LIFE IN CONTEMPORARY GAZA:

A PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION STUDY

A Senior Thesis submitted to the Department of Anthropology-
Sociology in partial fulfillment of the major in Anthropology-
Sociology.

Approved: _____

Dickey D. Lewis

Eman Surani

November 29th, 1981

I wish to thank the people of Iaca, for contributing to me a large amount of their time, help, and advice. My undying gratitude and blessings go to them all, especially my mother and father.

Introduction	1
A brief look at the	2
the life cycle	
birth	8
childhood	9
adulthood	9
marriage	10
divorce	14
death and burial	15
at	17
funeral	19
mourning	20
re-birth	23
the cycle of life and death	
birth	24
childhood	28
adulthood	30
marriage	30
the cycle of life and death	31
the cycle of life and death	
birth	34
childhood	35
adulthood	35
marriage	36
divorce	39
death and burial	39

	v
Irish Loffe	
vil	39
Fable and Song	41
compati	42
lal	
com	44
th	45
	51
com	
com	54
com	
	57
com	
	59
com	
com	61

1. Introduction, background	vi
2. A typical household	4
3. The family structure	5
4. The family structure and the role of women	6
5. Citrus fruits: a study of economic activity	7
6. The role of women in the family with invited guests	11
7. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
8. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
9. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
10. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
11. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
12. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
13. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
14. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
15. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
16. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
17. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
18. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
19. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
20. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
21. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
22. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
23. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
24. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
25. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
26. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
27. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
28. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
29. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
30. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
31. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
32. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
33. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
34. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
35. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
36. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
37. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
38. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
39. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
40. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
41. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
42. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
43. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
44. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
45. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
46. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
47. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
48. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
49. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
50. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
51. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
52. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
53. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
54. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
55. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
56. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
57. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12
58. The role of women in the family with invited guests	12

Palestine

Transjordan

Sea

Jerusalem

Nazareth

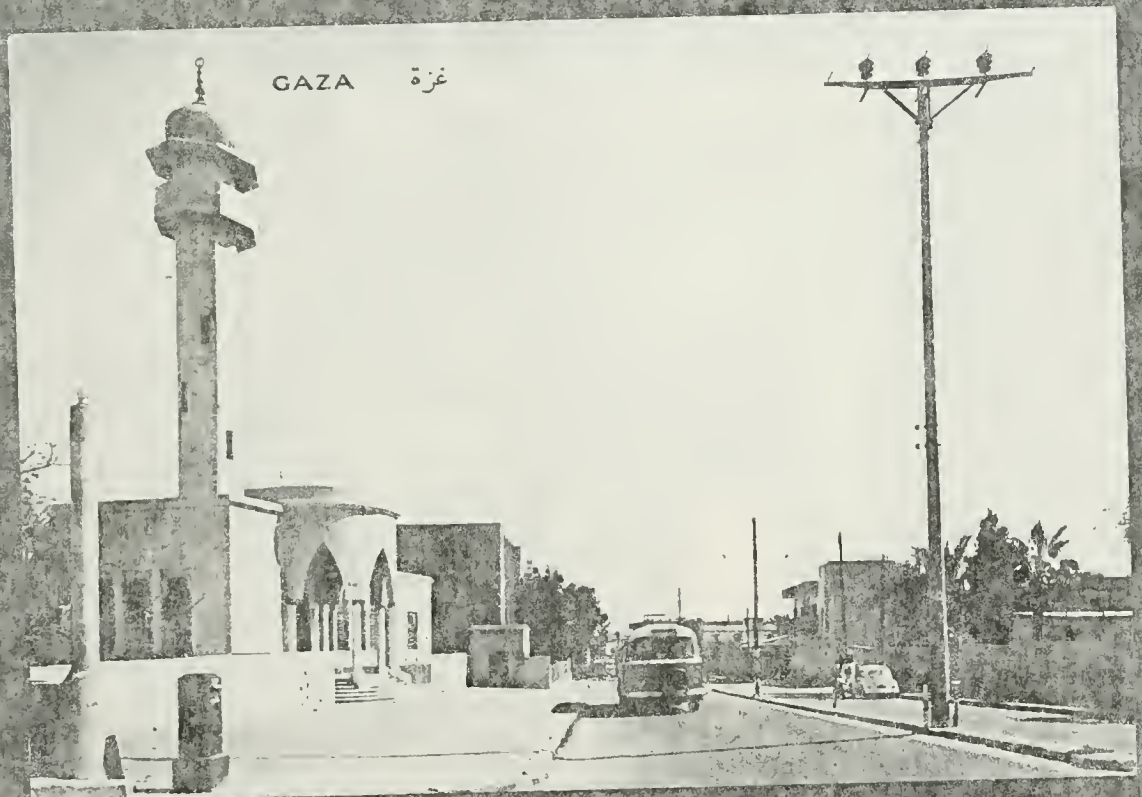
Dead Sea





مطر لمدينة غزة ١٩٤٢

Gaza: ١٩٤٢





İstanbul - 1927

Şişli - 1927

6





citrus fruits: the main economic crop of the region.

Birth, maturity, reproduction and death are the four basic and universal periods in the human life cycle, as noted by S. S. 1971: 175). The life cycle begins with conception and conception proceeds from sex. Childbirth transforms the family marriage and family, and insures the continuity of society. The next major event in the life of the child is adolescence, which is both a biological and social event. Maturity brings forth full participation in the social male and female, often signalled by marriage and parenthood. Death is the final social and biological event. Each of these will be examined briefly.

Birth

Most Arab girls are pregnant four to five months after their wedding. A pregnant woman goes to visit a doctor at the hospital, writes her name down for the hospital record and donates a kilo of blood for emergency use. Every month the expectant mother goes to the hospital for her monthly checkup. When in labor, she is taken to the hospital by her husband, relatives, or friends, and she goes through the birth process. The baby is given a check-up, after birth, and then removed to the hospital nursery, where a nurse is assigned it. The baby is breastfed by the mother, or a nurse, at the hospital. Close relatives come to visit the proud mother at the hospital. Before she goes home, the house is cleaned and delicious food cooked to greet the new arrival. After her one-week stay at the hospital, the mother is taken home, where relatives and friends come to congratulate her and present her with gifts for the baby. Seven days after the birth of the baby, a small party is given in honor of the delivery doctor. The Palestinians love children and believe that God gives more blessings with the arrival of each new child. Boys are preferred over girls. To illustrate this point, I have an uncle Isaac, who has eight daughters, in his attempt to have a son. A son, on the ninth attempt, was born. The biggest celebration in the history of Gaza

took place. My mother brought sweets of all kinds to distribute to the well-wishers. The father arrived at his house in torrents, to congratulate him on this happy occasion. Many of the people who came did not personally know my uncle but had heard of his great fortune. Presents poured in from everywhere, and even shopkeepers gave free gifts to the newborn infant. All those who came were in good cheer and moods, music, and dancing went on till a whole week after his birth. After the week was over, as tradition prescribed, a party was thrown.

Childhood

Childhood for both boys and girls is a very happy stage in the life of children. Boys and girls alike run, play, and are usually looked after by their siblings, relatives, and mother. At six years of age, children are sent to school. In all cities, the schools follow the British system of education. At about eight years old, a segregation of the sexes takes place. Boys go to boys' schools and girls to girls' schools. After six years, the children are made to take on responsibility and discipline. The child at the top of the class is highly appreciated. A little play time is afforded the child.

Adolescence

Adolescence is a difficult period for both sexes. Socially, the boys and girls tend to follow the parent of the same sex. The boys lose their sisters and mother around, and girls have to take responsibility for younger siblings and for helping the mother in all her daily chores. The boys are more or less carefree, the only difficulty they have to go through is puberty, like all young men of the world. The changes that both sexes go through are accepted by them. When the girls get their periods, their mothers explain to them that it is a very important thing to have because then they can have children. The girls, during their teens begin to care for themselves as far as being well-dressed, well-mannered, gentle, and not too forward. The boys are taught to be masculine,

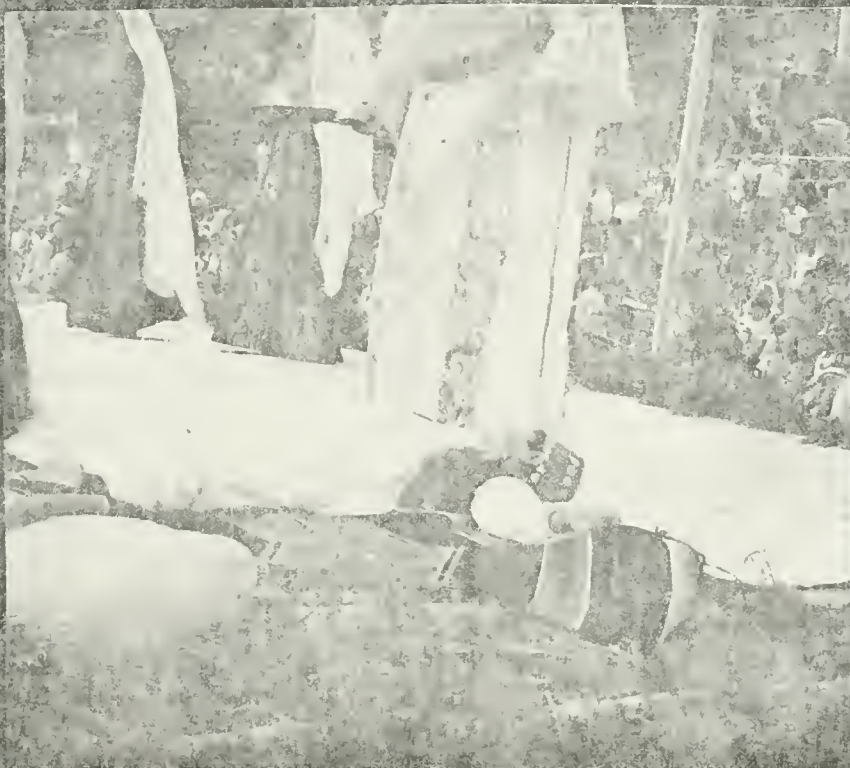
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... on a marriage with invitation card

11





الطفل ساعة الختان

Acting out the circumcision ritual in a transient village

during the writing of the book or formal recognition by the groom. With the groom, he had bought new clothes, jewelry, her wedding dress, and other household objects. Her father had given her more money to use, for he felt that he should make a last contribution to his beloved daughter. Dahoud had also given her, on an engagement day, diamond earrings, bracelet, and necklace. This is called a katha, which means the knot or tie of marriage. After the writing of the book, they had one last together under supervision.

The party was given for and arranged by Dahoud. Dancers came out in style and our relatives, women, did their gambet or kind of yodeling all the way through the wedding. A large buffet was laid out for our consumption. The magnificence of the seven-layer cake was furthered by the sight of the newly-weds cutting the cake together. Dahoud and Samia were supposed to sit on a podium, especially set up for the occasion, but they chose to sit among their guests, smiling and chatting with all the guests. Samia wore a beautiful white wedding gown and Dahoud wore a tuxedo.

After a while, the children decided, only the groom's female relatives were to dance, carrying candles in both hands. When I asked why only Samia's family could dance, I was told that Samia's family is supposed to be sad at losing a daughter, not happy.

A while before the party ended, Samia and Dahoud did sit on the podium. Gifts of money and jewelry were offered them then. The wedding ended at 11:00 p.m., so all the guests said their good-byes and congratulations and dispersed to their homes. Salt was thrown for good luck at the bride and groom as they were getting into their chauffeured car. This was done by the remains of the party, the relatives. Dahoud and Samia headed back to his house, and that night they left for their honeymoon to Greece.

When they got back, her parents asked her if everything was all right. Talking about sex is a taboo in our society, especially the young girls. I have heard elders secretly laughing at a sexual joke but never in front of a young girl. Samia had known that it was part of marriage and she had accepted it. She, like all other girls, had found out about

sex through a long discussion with her friends. Zania had now become a woman, a girl before she is not married. They moved into their new house after living, for about about a month, with Abdul's parents. On both occasions, people came to visit and congratulate them. Within one week of their birth, the town began to question whether or not Zania was pregnant. Everyone was relieved when they found out she was. Usually, newly weds become pregnant soon after and this is a custom which is adhered to. I know a couple who have been married for two years, whom the whole town is still gossiping about because they have had no children as yet.

When Zania settled down to her new life, she began to repay visits to all those who had come to congratulate her. When it was our turn, we baked a special cake, for sweets must be offered when a bride first comes to visit.

Marriage is a very important institution in Arab society. The very importance of it is such that a girl about to be married is very careful in her pick of what she believes is the right husband for her. In her mind, she knows she will stay married till death do us part. The Koran itself stresses the institution of marriage for the very reason that bad behavior would be all-existent. This is to warn off bad women from spoiling the town; thus, very few, if any bastard children are born.

Divorce

Although Islam allows divorce, our culture is dead set against this act. This is taken so seriously that when a girl gets married, the man has to pay bat'khna, a large amount of money, if he decides to divorce her. The figure of divorces, in Gaza, is exactly one-tenth percent a year. Divorce can only be allowed, in Islam, under the following conditions: if the couple are constantly warring, if a woman does not beget a child, and if either of the couple is unfaithful. The husband tells her you are divorced and then they go to a Sheikh to formalize their separation. The Sheikh tries to get them back together, but in failing, he writes out the divorce papers. Usually the husband will go to the Sheikh and send

him, and he died there. He came to the house for the first time after the death. In this period of time, he always wore black or dark blue to symbolize mourning. Luckily, one time he had a new suit after forty days, and he came to wear it for the first time after the death. He cried a lot when he learned of his death, and he was very sad, for he was a very healthy and energetic man. All my relatives, and those who knew my grandmother, came from all over the country, to say "long may your life be long." Most visitors were very distant. The most outstanding part of this ritual, in my opinion, is because this is what is reiterated at all times, was my mother's black Arabic coffee, without sugar.

In privacy, and before my mother, in a dark room, about the procedure of the mourning. She carefully explained, in the following manner. The house, which was the house of the deceased, is thoroughly cleaned and polished. The house is large and it is served to those coming to mourn. It is a very large house, and the deceased.

In the first week after the death, the relatives and friends come to the house. The house is cleaned and polished. The relatives come to the house and stay there for forty days after the death. Every Monday and Thursday, for the following forty days since the deceased passed away. The house is open all day to all who wish to visit.

When the first week of the death, the visitor shakes hand with all those present and then sits in one of the seats arranged round the room. The two sexes sit separately in different rooms. The general atmosphere here is a reverie-like state of quietness and somberness. This is maintained by the dark clothes worn. When one of the visitors decides to leave, she kisses either cheek of those closest to the deceased, such as his wife or daughter, gives her condolences and leaves. The men just shake hands and give their condolences after sitting for about half an hour. Some usually stay for an hour or more, otherwise it would be considered indecent for them to leave earlier.

On the first week of the death, a Sheikh is brought to read Koran, to ask God to forgive the deceased for his past sins. The deceased is immediately buried after death. He is carried in a fitting wooden coffin.

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Very - 151



The varying past-times: man smoking a hubbly-bubbly at
lunch and mother-child companionship
by the sea

2.



Last-time

Although the food is not available to us as much as variety and many is more of the same, we do have some different types of past-times than the rest of the world.

We love to visit the old city of Jerusalem. It is very ancient and full of antiquity. The old city is made up of stores and little shops which sell a large variety of things, ranging from cheap wood and pearls to jewelry to fruits and herbs. Usually, when we go to Jerusalem, we go to visit the Dome of the Rock. This mosque was built after Prophet Muhammad succeeded to heaven. While standing on a jutting rock, he was seen to ascend upwards. He was taken on a tour of the seven heavens and finally brought down on the rock. This is called Isra' and Mi'raj. The mosque was built over the area where the rock had risen. When we visit the mosque, we always make sure that we have shaved our heads and hair and that we are decently dressed, according to the traditions of Islam.

Since we do live near the sea, we always try to finish our housework and visit early, so we can go to relax at the beach during the evenings. We enjoy sailing on the new engine, Love Boat, so called after the American movie. Sometimes we go there early in the morning and have a large late breakfast of Pata Bourmouss.

When the summer vacations arrived, most everyone used to go to Egypt, but now the trend is to travel abroad to visit the different countries of the world, mainly Europe. Also, getting the family to go on a trip to visit the different parts of the country is part of every summer vacation.

Celebrations of National Holidays

Ramadan

During the month of Ramadan, July, my sister and I fasted from 3:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. everyday. During this period of fasting, we did not drink, eat, smoke, or let anything pass between our lips. By 7:00 p.m., we were usually starved. At this time, the Muezzin or Sheikh went up to the minaret of the mosque and called all Muslims to pray the last of the five daily prayers. Then he lighted the minaret to let us know we could break our fast. If we ever missed the Azhan or the lights, the neighborhood children made sure we knew by their loud cheering. We would then race down to the kitchen, seat ourselves around the dining room table, say Bism Allah Alrahman Alraheem (in the name of the Merciful God) and start eating our meal. Out of the whole year, Ramadan is the only time we eat our large meal in the evening.

Everytime I questioned my mother about fasting, she told me that God was testing our will as far as patience was concerned. This was reinforced in our daily fasting period, for we were not allowed to get upset or lose our temper. Another reason for fasting was to feel with the plight of the poor and to appreciate the blessings that God had bestowed upon us. Finally, fasting was good for our health for it allowed our stomachs to relax.

The only period I remember I did not fast was when I was traveling a far distance, or sick, or when I had my period. These reasons were all dictated by God as allowed, and of course to be made up later if one was capable. Otherwise, my grandma told me that I should provide food for one poor person each day I did not fast.

As far as having my period went, I was absolutely forbidden to fast, pray, touch the Koran, go to Mecca, or to the Dome of the Rock because it was Yahara (unallowed). In this case I was considered unclean. Such is also the case with a woman who has just given birth.

rior this month, my family and all the other families in Jaza hibernated. Our activities were limited to our daily chores. We usually wake up early, clean the house, took a bath, helped our mother cook, ate, and went for a walk to visit. One daily routine we thoroughly enjoyed was when the neighborhood children came over, after dinner, singing "Halo Ya Halo, may your door be blessed to your house forever prosperous." We gave them candy or money and they trotted off to the next house.

The 27th of Ramadan, called the night of the Qadr, was when Gabriel brought the Koran down to Muhammad. During this day, most strong believers pray all day and night and also made a wish. Some believed that God sent angels down to collect the wishes and then granted the wishes of those whom he knew were true believers.

Two days before the end of Ramadan, my family of cousins, parents, and grandparents, gave away money, equaling a kilo of wheat, for each poor person in a family.

We now joyfully awaited the dawning of the Eid. This is a three day holiday, which occurs at the end of Ramadan. We kept the television open and waited until 12:00 p.m. for all the Arabic countries to announce their sighting of the crescent moon. If so, then the Eid would be tomorrow. We had already made cookies stuffed with dates and cleaned the house as is the custom.

We woke early to be greeted by the fact that it was the Eid Al-Fajr (small Eid), else called Eid Al-Fitr (eating Eid). We found presents at the side of our beds and happily unwrapped them. Then we raced to my parent's bedroom to thank them and to say "Happy Eid". We each, from the eldest to the youngest, kissed our father's and mother's right hand, a tradition carried out only on special occasions or towards old people. My parents kissed us on either cheek saying "Happy Eid". My father and brother dressed and went to the mosque to pray. Meanwhile, we tidied the house and when my father and brother returned, we sat down to a hearty breakfast of cookies stuffed with dates and covered with powdered sugar. After putting the dishes away, my brother, sister, and I put on our new clothes and visited our relatives. At each house, we were offered

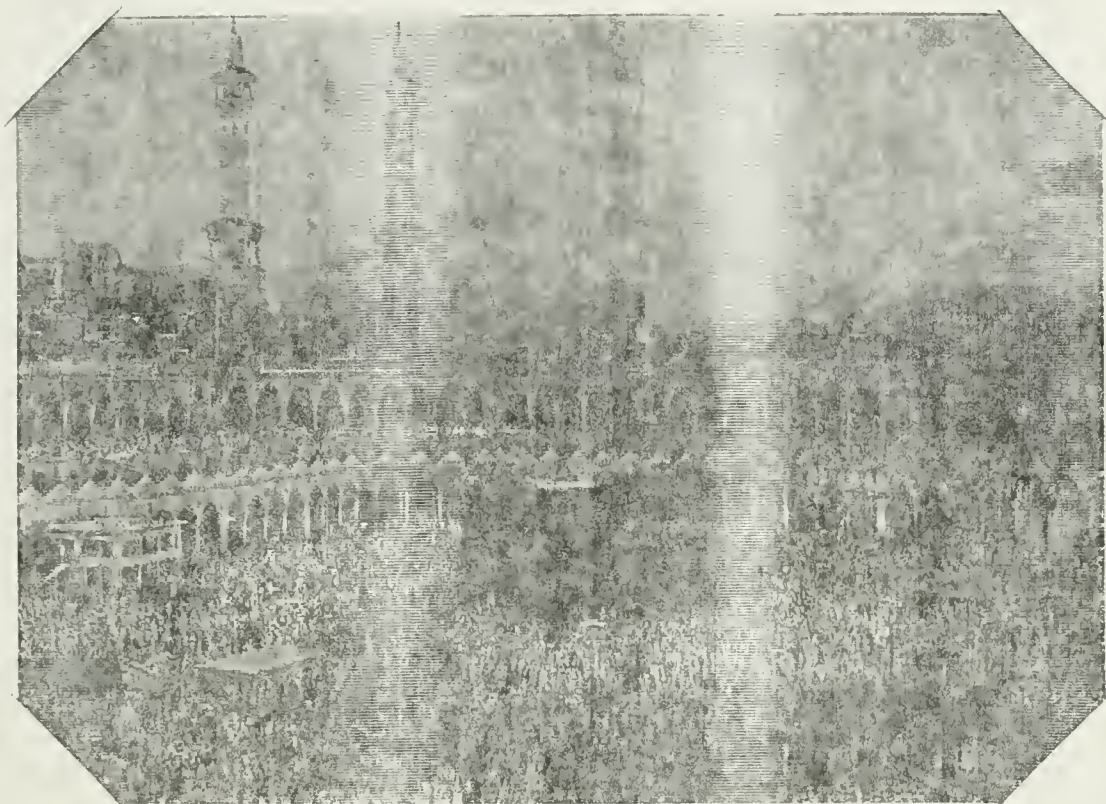


Making stuffed dates for the Eid and
morning prayers on the Eid

26

JERUSALEM, DOME OF THE ROCK





Haji Al-Hijr: pilgrimage at Mecca

rinks, sweets, and money. After we arrived home, we watched Egyptian movies put on for this occasion, and then helped my mother cook. She told her that we had visited all our closest relatives today and tomorrow we would visit relatives who were distantly related. She smiled and told us we were learning the norms of the society. Lunch on this day is very special, we had opted to cook stuffed turkey, and for dessert we had a specially ordered tray of Kunafa. A nap was agreeable to the whole family following this meal. The rest of the day was spent taking it easy. Since my grandma's father had died a week ago, our relatives came to visit on the second day of the Eid. To show respect for our grandma's loss, we offered only black Arabic coffee. On the third day of the Eid, my aunt visited her father's and brother's graves. (Make notes? 12-0:113,114).

Al-Hija

Two months and ten days after Ramadan, Hajj Al-Hija arrived. This holiday is celebrated at the end of the pilgrimage to Mecca. Before its arrival, many Muslims prepared for the journey. As the Fifth Pillar of Islam, it is required for all Muslims to visit the Ka'ba at least once in their life. In visiting Mecca, all the past evil that has been undertaken is forgiven and one's faith renewed.

This sacred ground, located in Mecca in Saudi Arabia, was erected and blessed by Abraham because he believed in one God.

As told me by Amr Abu Alham and his wife, they arranged all their visa and travelling requirements through the Shurafa Travel Agency. From they set off for Amman, Jordan and from there took a plane to Jedda in Saudi Arabia. In Jedda, they Ahramu. Amr, like all the men at the pilgrimage, just wore unsewn white cloth in Buddha fashion. His wife wore white skirt and blouse and covered her hair. Amr had to have his hair cropped short. Amr and his wife chose to stay at a hotel, although the Saudi government had prepared food and lodging for the pilgrims. On arriving at Mecca, they went around the Ka'ba seven times, praying for forgiveness as they did so. A guide led them around

and they repeated the prayers after him. Afterward, they walked to the Za'iyi where the waters of Zamzam appeared during Hajar's desperate search for water for her infant child Ismael. The pilgrims drank of this sweet water and began their trek from the hill of al-Jabal to that of Marwa. They went back and forth, jogging at certain points, seven times, as had Hajar done. After their afternoon and evening prayer at the Ka'ba, they headed for Jabal Arafat. This is the night of the Eid Al-Kabir (Big Eid) where all the pilgrims stay up all night reading Koran and praying on Jabal Arafat. The next day, Amo and his wife headed for a town called Muzdalafa to collect twenty-eight pebbles each. The following day, at Mona, they stoned the devil, Iblees, with the pebbles. The reason attributed this action was the devil's tempting Abraham to go against the will of God by not killing his son Ismael. The final step was to head for the slaughter house and pick out an animal to be slaughtered and given away to the poor. The animals consisted of cows, sheep, and camels. Usually two-thirds of the animal is given away to the poor while one-third is kept by the sacrificing person. Thus ends Islam. Then my Amo and his wife headed back to their hotel, each cutting off a lock of their hair, meaning they had ended their Hija. This whole episode took the whole week. When they got home to Dara, they stayed home for the next few months to greet all their well-wishers, for this is viewed as a very propitious occasion in our culture.

Every year, around two million pilgrims from all over the world, arrive to purify and reinstate themselves. One of the doctrines of Islam is that all people, rich and poor, are equal in the eyes of God. This is the reason for wearing the white cotton material by pilgrims.

Those who cannot afford to go on the pilgrimage or those who have died, have a declared national holiday for four days. The night before, those who are religious stay up and pray and on the Eid, a sheep is usually sacrificed. Again, a Sheikh is taken to read Koran over the close bed and flowers placed on their graves.

My grandma, parents, and I have only gone through a Umra, which is half a pilgrimage. We prayed seven times around the Ka'ba, walked and

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Howl: Al- ...

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... in the year ... A.D. ... day, sweets are
offered to all, a ... that the coming year will be a good and happy
one.

ter

... by Muslims ... the coming of
... and ... and chocolate ... of
... day.

III

I have heard the report of my informant from the generosity of the people in the area, and I expanded on this theme of hospitality.

These rows up, my family has always enjoyed our swimming. In the past, the Mediterranean Sea is about five minutes away from our house. In the past few years, we always used to be able to go swimming, but now the ever-growing movement of the Ikwa Al-Auslimeen prevent us, by threatning to kill any Muslim girl seen swimming. In mentioning my wanting to be able to go swimming in front of a aunt, she immediately invited us to go on a picnic, to her piece of land, which was located eight or ten miles away from the city. On the appointed day, she came and picked us up, since we still did not have a car, and drove us to her far-away land. They had a tent set up and the food she had cooked the night before was being heated up. The men went for a walk, and I took advantage of this situation by putting on our bathing suits and going in to swim. After a while I changed our clothes before the men returned. The food was heated by then and we had a delicious meal of fried chicken, rice and meat stuffed in olive leaves, fried rice, salad, and stuffed zucchini. Boy, was it delicious and filling. For dessert, we had guavas and some wheat. We then built a campfire and made Arabic coffee. At 5:00 p.m., she took us all home after we had helped them clean the camp up.

During this visit, I met a very sweet cousin of theirs with a very young little girl. We learned that her husband had cancer, but she was not telling about this, and no one was going to tell her because they loved her and did not want to change her and her husband's relationship.

The constant air of generosity is when fruits grow in the gardens, cousins and friends share them with all their neighbors and relatives by sending some over. We were constantly, until today, sending guavas to all our friends, neighbors, and other whom we knew. In returning anyone's dish, it is viewed as rude to send the dish back empty, so something is always made or bought to be put in the dish when returning it.

Conclusion

The poem reflects Arabian folk traditions, festival, songs, and superstitions. Most of our ancestors' traditions, called folklore, came from the rural population of the past, which are still carried on in rural areas today. Folklore is important in giving an insight into the culture, for present behavior often originates under traditional cultural norms as Benedict notes (p. 11, p. 12).

Appendix

My mother's relationship with her father is an example of Arab culture. One thing we can infer that our society is patrilineal. The father's name is the established one throughout the generations to come. This is reflected in the Arab's attitude to have women. The mother is not called by her name but by the name of her son. For example, my mother's name is Ahmad, my mother is called Umm Ahmad (the mother of Ahmad).

The concern over the importance of male sex has even extended into our everyday life. For example, when my brother's friends come over to visit, he makes sure he greets them at the door and takes them to sit in an unobtrusive part of the house. Otherwise, my sister or I go to the door, call our brother, and disappear. When we make the drinks for them, we call my brother to come and get them. Even if my brother and I sit in the kitchen with my brother, we could not talk to them because they just look down or away. On countless occasions, I have heard my brother talking about how a friend got mad at him for saying bad words to his friend's sister or even mentioning that she was pretty. This attitude is very odd to our half-western upbringing, we asked why this divide was created between the two sexes. The answer we received was that the Arab men are afraid of the beauty of women, so doubts were created concerning the women so that the men would stay away from them till marriage. In explanation, the male sex did

not want to miss all takes concerning women's rights for their mistakes for the rest of their lives. Islamic influence is also revealed, the importance of the protection of women. As'kake notes (1990:13).

Until today, some old-fashioned parents do not allow their daughters to be educated, fearing that once they start how to write, they would start reading and receiving bad ideas. As'kake notes (1991: 49). In fact, of all the cities in Palestine, the women are allowed to go to the movies only on Thursday. At the mosque, as is the custom, the men and women sit in separate sections apart. Behind this lies a great fear for the very existence of the culture. If a girl went out with a boy, the girl would lose her virginity. Virginity is a sacred word at home for it is the responsibility and obligation of the girl to own. A girl's future life depends on her virginity and reputation. If she was not a virgin, she would want to marry her, and her family would be disgraced in the eyes of society. Some would report that many parents these days, to rid themselves of the shame, in fact kill their daughter. Now, however, the parents, in the middle class, do not allow their daughter to marry her way to her country.

Respect

Respect is a very important part in our society, especially concerning older people. When we meet an older person, like a grandma, we are supposed to kiss her right hand. This part of the tradition is disappearing. However, some aspects of respect are still tightly tied on to. For example, when I was exhausted, I sat on the sofa and put my legs up on the table. My grandma came after a while and sat facing me. When my father walked into the living room, she sharply reprimanded me for having my feet up facing my grandma. This action is considered as a sign of disrespect and rudeness.

Superstitions

As I was reading a book one day, my ears started to ring. When I

mentioned it is to be a good thing, and it is a good thing, they said that it was
believed that it was a good thing, and it is a good thing.

Another of the superstitions, which are usually carried out by my
mother, is that of the ear. She had a small ear into the room and
I could not take up, and I could not take up, and I could not take up.
I could not take up, and I could not take up, and I could not take up.
I could not take up, and I could not take up, and I could not take up.
I could not take up, and I could not take up, and I could not take up.

Another superstition is that of the owl. It is a superstition, and it is a superstition.
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Superstitions

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... eivity: the solid



Folklore: serving and drinking of abic coffee



Herbs

My first introduction to the traditional use of healing herbs, to cure, was when I had my period. I felt absolutely frustrated so my aunt fixed me a drink called Yeryamiya. Like all herbs in the Arab home, this was grown in the backyard of the house. Although the Yeryamiya tasted terrible at first, I felt much better after I drank it, for it is especially used for making the blood flow of the period easier. Other cures used, the few that I know, are: Ak'ha', which is used for stomach aches and colds and Yansoon, used for gastric problems. The method of making these herbs, to be dissolved, is not unlike the making of tea. They are boiled and sugar is added to make it easier to drink.

Religiosity

I directly met and experienced this festivity only once when my cousin, Yalch, graduated from college. His mother made a Koolid. This Koolid was made because Yalch's mother had sworn that when he graduated, she would make a Koolid to thank God. A religious woman came on the day appointed, lit candles and incense, and read Koran. We were all, the invited, women. This occasion is celebrated by men or women together. This religious woman urged us to repeat the Koran after her. Sweets were served after we had, towards the end of the Koolid, faced Mecca and raised our hands in supplication.

Traditional Coffee

My sister and I were making coffee for my mother's guest, Aunt Hana, when we came up with a magnificent idea. Why don't we ask Aunt Hana to read our coffee cups. We hurriedly prepared another tankard of coffee for all of us and went to sit down. After we drank the coffee, we turned our cups upside down in their platters and waited till all the extra coffee had dripped out. When we turned our cups right side up, a design or pattern was to be seen. This was what Aunt Hana was going to read for us.

the habit has changed in the past, however. We had had nothing to do since we came to the child care. As a matter of fact, since the women spent a lot of time to either, they started entertaining themselves by reading the coffee cups. Aunt Isha reads the usual letters or presents arrive, such as letters from my mother, and so forth. Sometimes, when we think we believe all this, the reaction to our belief is that all the news and all happen, only in him. The cup is viewed as a part-time which is fun.

The Arabic coffee is very carefully made, almost ritually. For each small cup of water, one flat teaspoon of sugar and one full teaspoon of coffee are measured out and then added all together. In pouring the water into the cup, the foam on the top of the coffee is first placed in the cups and then the coffee is poured. On one occasion, I saw a small cup of water float off from floating in the middle of my cup. This meant, I was told, that I would be receiving a good cup.

Black Arabic coffee, without sugar, is served only on two occasions. The first is when couriers come to pay their respects to the family of the host. In the second instance, black coffee is served after very sweet dessert. When Arabic coffee is offered at the end of a visit, if it is offered at the beginning of the visit, the guest will take it to himself to home; thus, when served early, the server says this is for you alone.

If the coffee cup is overflowing when it is served, it means that the person serving it is upset with the guest. How much this is acknowledged I am not sure, but as a general rule we try to never overflow the cup. When coffee is spilled on the floor, it is viewed as a good luck sign.

Finally, the serving method. This is a rule which I have great difficulty in following. When serving, the coffee should be offered from the eldest to the youngest person present, according to age.

Coffee is served to men and women alike, after the age of sixteen years old.

by it. If the person, who gave the name, will go home who caused it, a piece of that person's cloth, his skin, hair, and perhaps even an eye will be stuck in the street for him to see. While, the rain is falling.

White and Red

I have finally decided to compile some of my "old-time" fables. The first of this series is a fable and is called "White and Red". This fable, my favorite, is one of a long list of the most crucial sections of the fable.

Long ago, there lived a girl, Dandamoon, with her brother, Dandamoon. Every day he went off to fish and come home, with his catch. One day the boy, he said: Dandamoon, open the door of La'la'

I am your brother
Your father's son.

The son of the fisherman of the wild

One day, when this pattern, Dandamoon would open the door, take the fish, and then they would both sit down to enjoy their meal. Their neighbor was a school or fish-like creature. He heard this and every day figured that Dandamoon was fat with all that fish. One day he went over and knocked on the door saying, in his loud, hoarse voice: Dandamoon, open the door of La'la'

I am your brother
Your father's son.

The son of the fisherman of the wild

The boy, who knew that he was not her brother, thus answered: I am not your brother, my father's voice is that of a school.

The boy, who would be back to get her. When Dandamoon came home that day, Dandamoon agitatedly told him of what had happened and he then calculated her outsmarting the school. The next day, a knock came at the door and Dandamoon heard her brother's voice say:

Grandmother said to him, "What will you do?"

"I am going to fight!"

"Your father's name?"

"The name of the brave man is Dandamon!"

"Dandamon!" cried the king and queen. The king's feet swelled near up. Then Dandamon came home. He called and called, knocked and knocked, but no answer was forthcoming. He realized that the ghoul had come, so he started to climb high and low, not leaving a rock unturned. Finally, he found the ghoul cackling. "Dandamon! Knocked on the door and said 'Allo! Allo! Allo!' and say 'peace' to you. The ghoul answered him saying: since your name came before your words, I am going to let you live. Otherwise, I would have let the inhabitants of this dwelling hear the crunching of your bones. All conversation was made and then Dandamon followed out the ghoul, he asked him if he wanted to have a fight. The ghoul said yes and Dandamon went off to get a pair of steel-like horns, while the ghoul just stood and waited to fight, continuing that he would win. As the battle started, Dandamon lowered his horn and the ghoul's horn broke. Dandamon stepped out saying 'I win!' and the ghoul died. Then Dandamon and Dandamon took all the treasure they found in the ghoul's house. They both married and lived happy and rich for the rest of their lives. Then my grandmother told, as an ending, to us:

Woota Toota War hat all - reflects

(and thus ended the story.)

If it sounded truthful, to you there is a sacrifice

If it sounded bad, to you there is no more

If it sounded nice, to you there is a story

If it sounded good, to you there is a song

My grandmother brings home, to me, how boys are taught to be bravely like their sisters, even older ones. Bravery is a theme which runs through our culture, greatly obeyed and believed in by boys.

It is very hard to find this. They are all parate and cow-toy movies. But married and rich are also important to our society, for this theme runs through all our folktales.

- 4 -

... which has ... status. ... ship ... as ...

... very widely ... occupation ... doctor, engineer, ... two best ...

... position ...

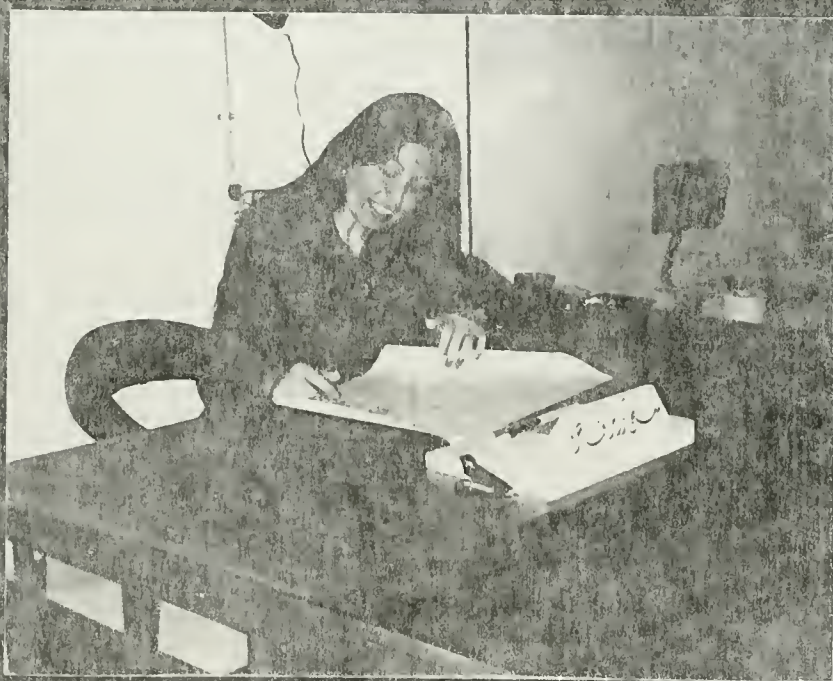
... choose to only ... their citrus fruit, while other take on other ... the main form of occupation, for men, was to ... the best and largest crop in the town.

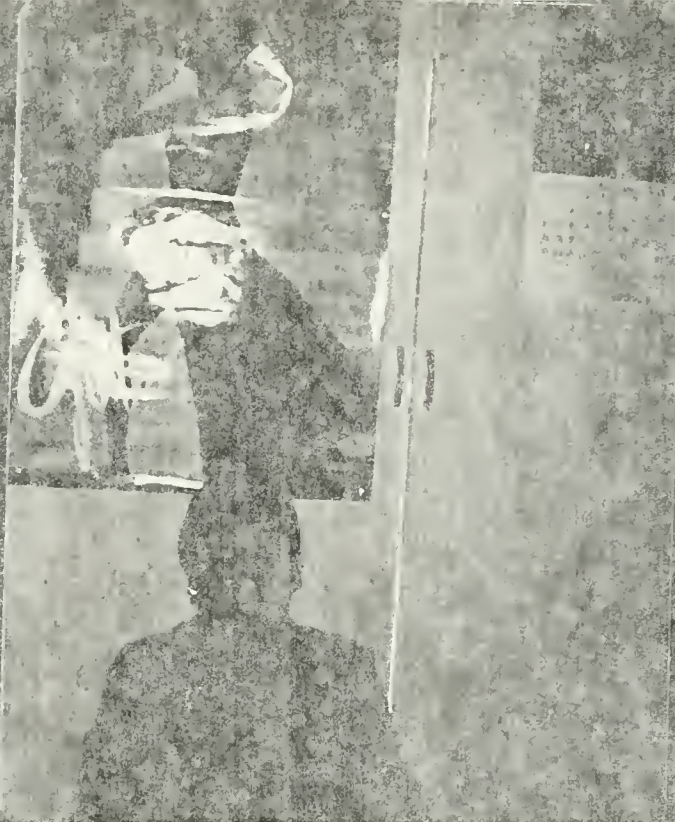
... are beginning to be integrated now as a result of widespread education. Education is now viewed as a very important factor for the boys and girls. The boys are heading towards finishing



occupations: females: Salwa and Salma at work

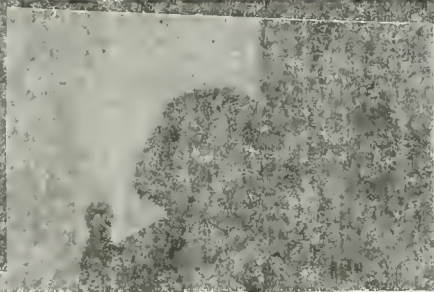
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Occupations: Lawiya and Zuleikha (1940-1945) achievements

47





نظرة جديدة للأمومة!

Motherhood: the chief occupation of women

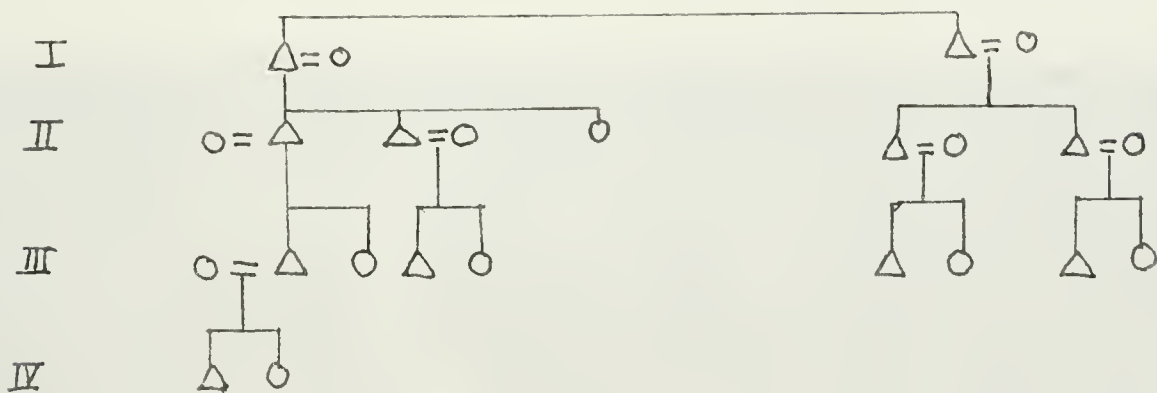
years of marriage. She was left a widow with one baby daughter. Like Ikram, she refused all the marriage propositions made for the same reason. Having finished high school, she went to Kuwait and worked as a teacher. Now she is happy and well-off, with a house of her own, to which she returns every summer, in Gaza.

My last encounter was with Wisal. When she married at thirteen years of age, her twenty-four year old husband was extremely rich. She had two sons from him and when they began losing money, they moved to Jericho to live with her parents. Her husband could not accept the fact that her parents were supporting him and his family. One day, on the pretense that he was taking his two sons for a walk, he shot himself and his two sons. He and one of his sons died, the other son revived. At this time Wisal was two weeks pregnant. She had another son, talk about fate. With her brother's help and what little fortune her father had left her, she raised and taught her children. One is now a politician and the other an airline waiter. Only after her sons grew and worked did she consent to finally get married again. She also consented because her brothers pressured her, saying a young widow should not be left alone in the house. She remarried at the age of thirty-two.

Family Structure

Our families, in general, are extended families. Only a few years ago everyone was living in the same house. Now every nuclear family is living in a house of their own, but they are still living next door to each other. Whenever anyone is sick or in need, all the rest of the family come together to care for that member of the family. Within this institution of marriage and family ties, second cousin marriages are prevalent and are the most favored of all marriages. This is so that the wealth stays within the family circle.

One misconception about Arab families is that the males are married to more than one woman each. Although Islam allows polygamy in terms of marrying four women at once, there are set rules which must be met. Thus, a man must treat and love all the four women equally in every which way. This tends to act as a cold-wash to those who have any ideas about marrying more than one because these standards can not be met by any human. Other factors, such as the cost of living and the woman's opinion, count to a great extent in today's society. Nowadays, no woman is going to allow her husband to marry another. Just in bringing up this topic with some of my friends, I was practically attacked. This action is practically non-existent in my society today. It did exist in the past.



A Residential Extended Family

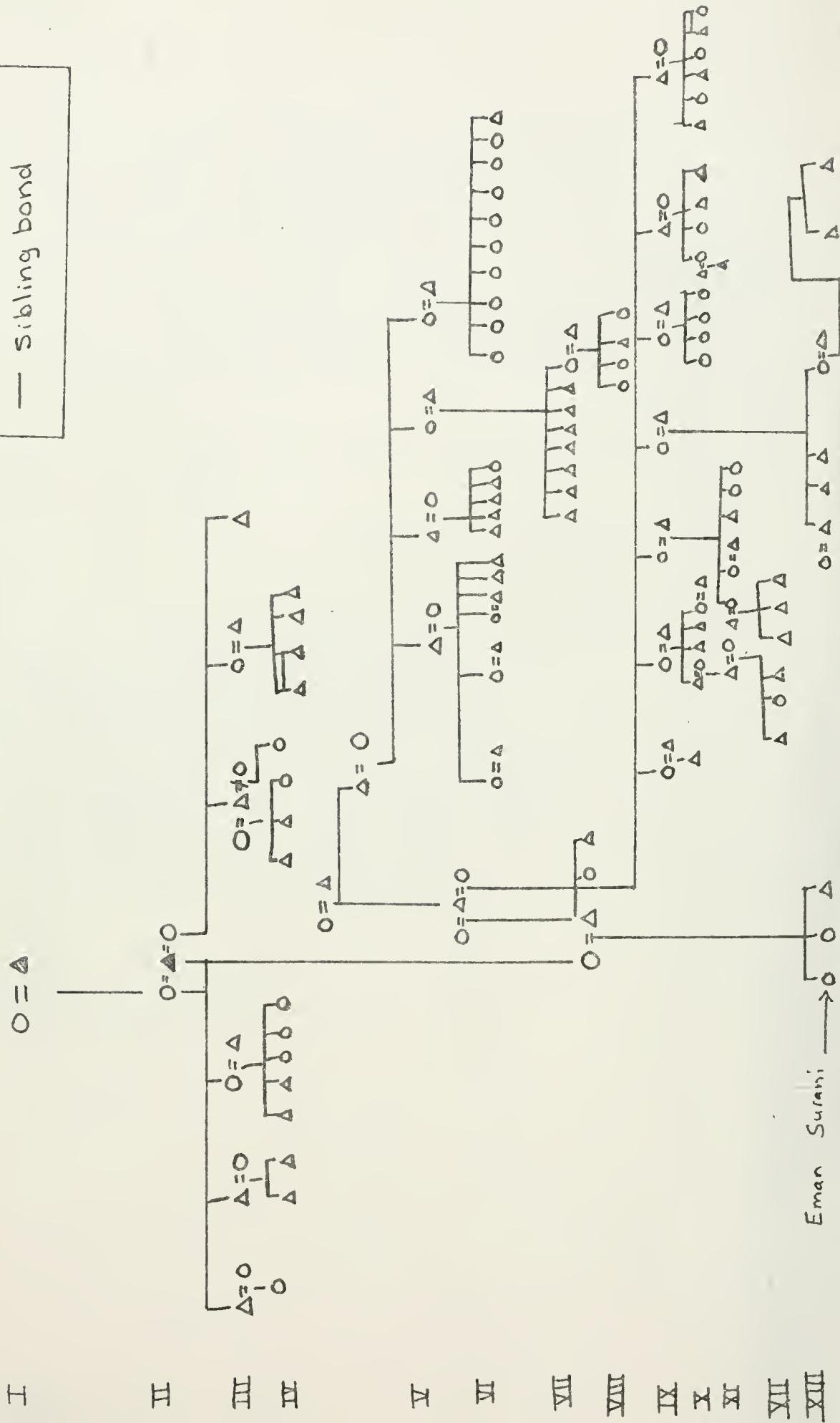
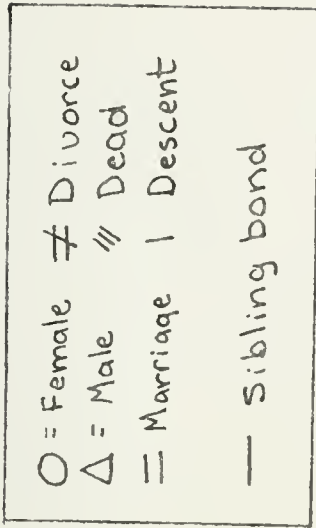


Family structure followed by genealogy

55



Prophet Muhammad



Islam works as an equalizer of all people. It serves as a religion, critical thought, social life, philosophy, and art all in one. *As take notes.* All that is told in Islam serves a purpose or has a reason behind it. For example, praying is a good physical and mental exercise, and it also helps in directing. *As take notes.* (17:1:19).

They are not allowed to eat pork because pigs have dirty food habits. They eat everything in sight, including their feces. Pigs also have a worm living in them, which, if not well-cooked, can be transmitted to humans and hard to get rid of.

Drinking is not allowed because once a little drink has been introduced, more will follow and soon the person will have lost all possession of thought and coherence.

Islam is said to be a religion for all time and place throughout history. This means that the rules or laws of Islam can be applied during any period of history, no matter how far back it was written.

It also carries out all the doctrines of God, the five pillars of Islam, and being a true believer, one has to believe in all the other God-believing religions, Christianity and Judaism.

The five pillars of Islam consist of: fasting, almsgiving, Zakat to the poor or alms, praying five times a day, going on the pilgrimage to Mecca, and the belief in only one God. This last pillar is the most important. The call to prayer, which is daily called five times, sums up how important this pillar is.

God is most great!

God is most great!

I testify that there is no God but Allah.

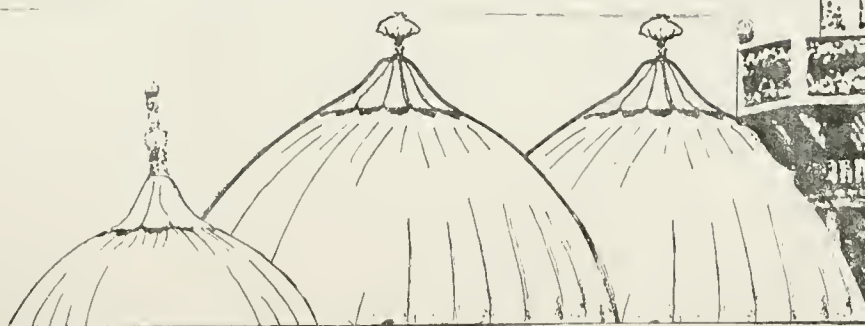
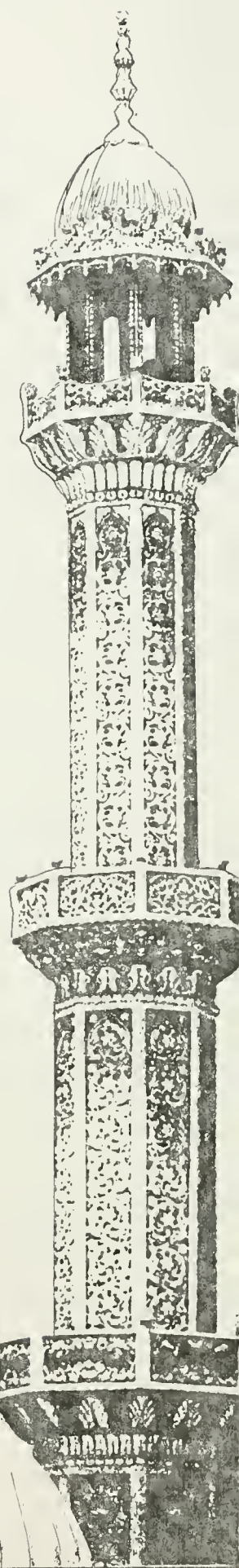
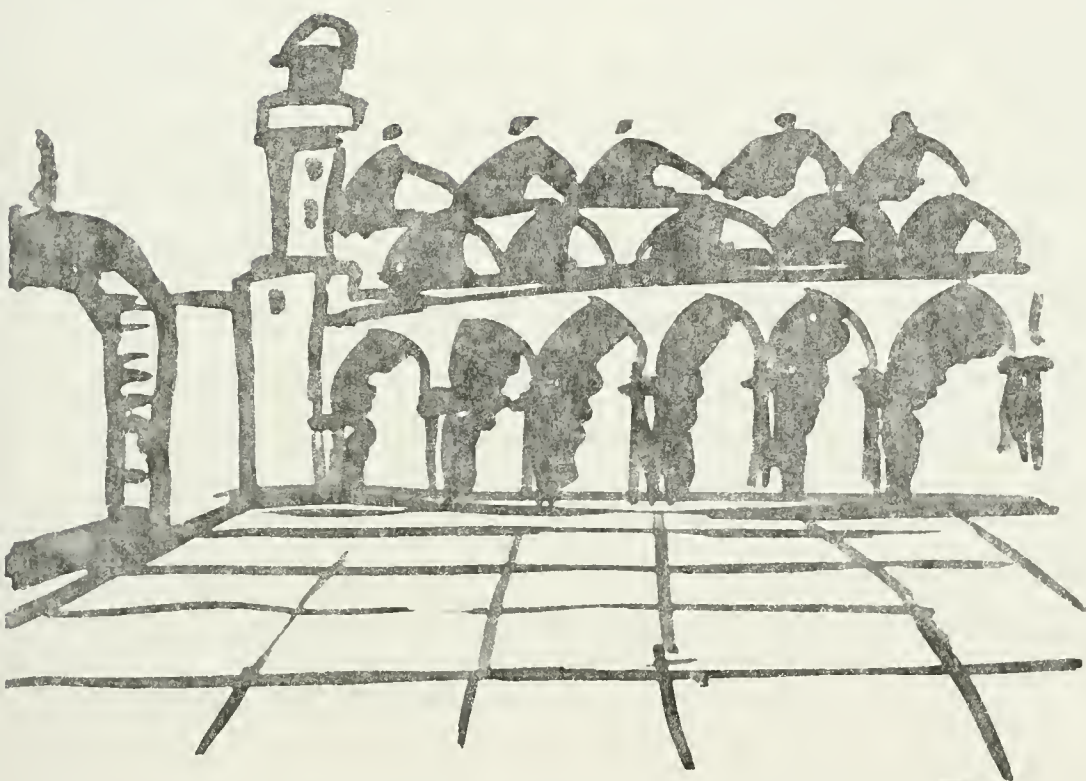
I testify that Muhammad is the prophet of Allah.

Arise and pray; arise and pray.

God is great;

There is no God but Allah!

المرأة المسلمة



Summary

In summary, I have written about the few but very important life events and rituals we have. Birth, marriage, death, and circumcision, the central core of our society depends on how these institutions are carried out through the generations. The life cycle, as I presented it, makes up the general over-view of the society to one not acquainted with it. Then I went on to mention the holidays existent in our society, mainly to stress the religious emphasis that this society tends towards. Hospitality I mentioned as a separate entity because it is truly an amazing feature which I have never seen anywhere else. Going on to folklore, I hope that I have presented a general idea which will help a stranger start to comprehend the workings and ways of the middle class Gazan society. Occupations is a field where I leaned mainly on female occupations since they are rare and not known by most westerners as capable of working. The family structure, compared to the west, I found of utmost interest. Finally I gave a brief account of the workings of Islam because Islam is viewed as a part of life at home not a separate institution.

In relating this short account of my country, I am trying to draw the reader into a new and strange culture by giving

a mental tour of the people, thoughts, beliefs, culture, and way of life. I have tried to somewhat analyze some of the existent traditions, folklores, and other material I presented. Thus, a foreigner would begin to think and meditated about the difference of culture and how it came to be. For now, a lot of the values of the Arab and western culture are becoming more and more alike. For example marriage, hard work, equality, motherhood,..... constitute part of every society, yet there are also differences within the culture itself. These and other questions or thoughts plague the anthropologist in his search for the beginnings and divergence of man.

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